

The Republican.

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ON MIRACLES.

It has been a frequent and positive assertion among the advocates of Christianity, that the performance of *miracles* proves the authority, and the divine origin of the religion of Jesus; and that the superhuman and extraordinary deviations from the usual course of nature, which are related in the writings of the New Testament, could have been effected by nothing less than by the almighty power of God, thereby showing that Christianity must be true because God himself is the author of it. The propagators of this unqualified and dogmatical assumption must consent to be ranked among the most wilful deceivers of mankind, or otherwise they must admit their extreme ignorance of the subject upon which they treat; in either case they are totally unworthy of belief. The design of the following pages is to show that *all the religions which have ever been established*, and have made any figure in the world from the most remote ages to the present time, have laid claim to the performance of *miracles*, and all with the same pretensions to belief, and all equally deserving of credibility; because they all depend upon the *same evidence*; that of historical record—and *no other*. If it be affirmed that the narration of events which happened in far distant ages is enveloped in obscurity and fable, modern history cannot be said to be entirely free from the same defects. Much of what is related to have been performed during the reigns of the early Kings of England is extremely mysterious and equivocal. The account of the reign of Richard the Third is notoriously distorted by partial and venal writers, and the numerous murders and atrocities ascribed to him are at best very problematical. Still later in Scotland, the very existence of the individual known by the name of the "Admirable Crichton" is extremely doubtful, and destitute of certifying evidence; and even in our own times the actions ascribed to Buonaparte are differently related according to the opinions or the bias of the minds of the several authors. Whether that illustrious individual headed the troops when the celebrated charge was

made over the Bridge of Lodi, or whether Augereau performed the exploit, is not satisfactorily known. The same doubt hangs over the charge of the French cavalry at Waterloo. Some writers mention that a garrison which had capitulated was inhumanly slaughtered by the command of Buonaparte, while others as stoutly deny the fact. Hundreds of other instances might be mentioned, but these are sufficient for illustration. The inference which is fairly drawn from these contradictory and dubious statements is, that in our argumentation, we may apply with equal propriety the records which are handed down to us by the ancient historians as well as those of more modern date; and we must admit that a *miracle* is not rendered *more true* by being said to have been performed in comparatively modern times. The accounts of some of the miraculous events connected with the different systems of religion are inserted in their respective places as admitted historical facts without any objection being raised against the validity even of the most remote legends; because if it be opposed to them that their origin is so fabulous and uncertain, and their relations so unnatural, absurd, and improbable, the same admission must likewise be made against Christianity, which is not in the smallest possible degree more established upon a true basis than the wonderful narrations contained in the Hindoo or Egyptian mythologies. Those who are well versed in theological and political history are fully satisfied and convinced that the writings of the New Testament are as utterly destitute of certainty in a chronological point of view as is the account of the Argonautic expedition, or the siege of Troy. It is, therefore, obvious, that if a logical deduction is to be made of the comparative genuineness of the various systems of religious faith which have at sundry times laid claim to belief and observance, it must be allowed as the grand principle of the argument, that the evidence by which each is supported is substantially and altogether correct, because if not all given the same degree of credibility at the outset, the question is *prejudged*, and all reasoning and approach towards truth is completely precluded. If all historical relations whatever are supposed to be doubtful or false, away, then, goes all the diversities of religions, and Christianity among them.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF THE EGYPTIANS.

IN the examination of the Egyptian religion we have before us the most ancient mode of worship with which history furnishes us with the detail; and although the Chinese and the Hindoo mythologies are of extremely remote antiquity, yet it is most generally admitted, by all conversant with chronology, that the Egyptian bears away the palm of priority. Whether it be so or not is

very immaterial to the purport of these observations, which is only to shew that *all* the systems of religious faith which have been palmed upon the insulted understandings of mankind have entirely agreed upon *one* grand feature of superstition, each taking the same mode of asserting its authenticity, and each being equally successful in the result; all flourishing for a season, and persecuting whoever dared to gainsay their celestial origin and endowments, and afterwards decaying from utter worthlessness, furious intolerance, and the improving spirit of each succeeding age. The ancient Egyptians acknowledged *one* supreme being, but worshipped several other deities under various significations, and under different forms, the principle of which were—Osiris, the sun: and Isis, the moon: there were, also, Jupiter or spirit; Vulcan or fire; Ceres or the earth; Oceanus, moisture (meaning the River Nile); and Minerva, sometimes called Neith, air. Besides these celestial gods they had several terrestrial ones, some of whom had been formerly kings, and others bore the same name as the heavenly deities—as Ammon; Juno, Vesta, Vulcan, and many others. The principle of universal goodness was Osiris, to whom the creation, the harmony, and the beautiful order of the world was attributed. The evil genius or wicked principle was Typhon, emblematical of the ass, who was the author of all the evil that existed in the universe. All the Gods were oracular, and the oracles which they related are very numerous, and are to be found in abundance in Diodorus, and other authors. The most famous of all the places where oracles were delivered were those of Latona, in the city of Bretus; and, in latter times, Serapis, at Alexandria. The Egyptians professed two kinds of theology—the *exoteric* addressed to the vulgar and illiterate: and the *esoteric*, confined to a select number of the priesthood, and to royalty; mystery and concealment being absolutely necessary to the propagation of their doctrine. This religion certainly embraced the idea of a future state, for it was generally believed that the bodies rested in the sepulchre, but that the souls shone in the stars, as that of Orus in the constellation of Orion, and many others, but their opinions were so concealed under the form of symbols, enigmas, and hieroglyphics, that the real meaning of them is difficult to be understood.

The most ancient religion, was, like all others, a *miraculous religion*, and its extraordinary and supernatural performances are extremely numerous, so many, that the pretensions of no other can compete with it. The very foundation of their religion was a *miracle*, it being stated that Oannes, an irrational animal, with a body like a fish, and having two heads, one under the other; the feet of a man at the extremity of a fish's tail; and with a human voice; instituted the mode of worship which they adopted; established the political relations of society; taught the arts and sciences; caused cities to be built, and temples, for the worship

of the gods, to be erected, and imparted everything that was necessary for a civilized and enlightened country, the Almighty being tired of beholding his creatures wandering about in savage ignorance and brutality. This wonderful being, Oannes, was also an author as well as an orator, and committed his instructions to writing. This *grand miracle* has served as a pattern for some of the future inventors of theological reveries to adopt with modifications to the support of the supernatural origin of their own dogmas; among whom were Zoroaster and Máhomet. All the Egyptian divinities had the power of working *miracles*. Apis, one of the chief symbolical terrestrial deities, was begotten by celestial fire upon a cow which had been dedicated to Iris, and his extraordinary power was so great, that during the seven days, annually, in which the priests celebrated his birth-day—the *crocodiles lost all their ferocity and blood-thirsty dispositions, and became perfectly tame and gentle*. The Sphinx, a monstrous deity, engendered by Typhon, was a devourer of all those who were unable to solve his dark and enigmatical questions. Numberless are the *miracles* recounted, and in the Old Testament we find the Egyptian magicians vying with Moses in their performance; but after a fruitless contest, seeing themselves so very inferior in skill to the Jewish lawgiver, they gave up the rivalry in despair, and left the greatest conjuror master of the field.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF THE CHINESE.

ONE of the most ancient systems of religious worship of which we have any knowledge, is that of the Chinese, which is stated by Pere Amiot, a missionary long resident in the country, to bear every characteristic mark of the primitive doctrine of the people of Israel cotemporary with Moses; and that it may be traced back from age to age without interruption to the renewal of the human race by the grandson of Noah. There is no doubt but its origin is of far more remote antiquity, as its legendary and astronomical records are brought up from a much greater distance of time, and it is admitted by all that no nation in the world is more exact in registering the relations of memorable events than that of the Chinese.

The greater part of the population of this extensive country are Deists, and remain steady to the old faith which was formerly professed by all—that of One God, all-powerful, avenging, and rewarding. There are, however, two sectarian doctrines in that extensive empire, which are embraced by some of the inhabitants. Six hundred and three years before the Christian era, an enthusiast, named Lao-tsé, founded a system of religion which went by the appellation of the Tao-sse. Marvellous and curious events are related of his birth; and it is affirmed, that his mother,

being in a retired situation, suddenly *conceived*, being impressed by the vivifying virtue of heaven and earth. For the space of eighty years she continued in a pregnant state, and at last was delivered of a son, who was called, from the whiteness of his hair, the *grey-haired child*, *Lao-tsé*. The priests who propagated his system after his death asserted the divine origin of their master by numberless **MIRACULOUS PERFORMANCES**; among which were—the *falling from heaven of a book full of mystical characters and magical figures, containing the law as written by Lao-tsé, and sent by him upon earth in that unusual manner to prove beyond doubt, and to silence all scepticism as to the reality of his Godhead.* A stupendous and miraculous power was given by him to the priests—that of being enabled to distil a liquor, a draught of which would ensure immortality: and so enthusiastically credulous were his disciples that it was believed, by most of them, for a great number of years. Another and more ancient sect are the worshippers of the God Fôt, who lived about five hundred years before the time of Pythagoras, and one thousand before the commencement of the Christian system of chronology. It is impossible not to see the very striking points of resemblance there are between this God and Jesus Christ in birth and parentage, in precept and adventures. His mother brought him into the world through the left side, *she being a virgin at the time of conception and delivery*, and gave birth to her son eight thousand times under various forms, sometimes as an elephant, a lion, an ape, &c. till last he appeared in all his divine nature in the figure of a *man*. Exhausted with her great efforts, his mother expired soon after her last delivery. The life of *Fot* was thought of so much importance by the King of the country then existing, that he caused *all the male children who were born about the same time to be destroyed, hoping that in the general massacre this obnoxious personage might be killed.* *Fot*, however, being saved by some shepherds, lived in a quiet, retired manner for thirty years, when he began to preach his doctrine, and to perform miracles, casting out devils or evil spirits from the bodies of those who were afflicted by them. One of the miracles which were performed by the interposition of this God was the conversion of gilt paper which had been burnt at the funeral of a parent, according to the customs of that period, into solid gold, and the transformation of silk and other vestments at that ceremony into splendid and magnificent garments adapted for the other world. Some of his precepts, which are handed down to us, bear a similitude to those of a much later moralist, and to whom all the credit of being the first inventor of a sound system of ethics is usually attributed. “*He that forsaketh his father and his mother (says Fôt) to follow me, shall become a perfect heavenly being.*”—“*Heaven and earth shall pass away, therefore despise your bodies, which are perishable, and think only*

of your immortal souls."—"Mortify the flesh, subdue the passions, meditate upon my doctrine, bear injuries with patience, and feel no enmity against your neighbour," &c.

His life was one continued scene of mortification and self-denial, and when he died he bequeathed his sacred volume containing all his precepts to his disciples. This individual and *miraculous* founder of a religion, be it borne in mind, was in existence *one thousand years before the birth of Jesus Christ*.

In Thibet, in Japan, in Ceylon, in Siam, and many surrounding districts, the same God Fôt is worshipped, though under different names—as *Budd, Budso, Bedhou, Somona-Kodom, &c.*, yet they all agree as to the essential points of his history, and celebrate his functions of *mediator* and *expiator*; acknowledge his *fasts*, his *sufferings*, and his *penitence*, and differ only in the application of some of his most abstruse doctrinal points.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF THE BRACHMANS.

THE theology of the Brachmans appears to have had its origin in the mystical reveries of the Egyptian priests, to which country it was carried by commercial intercourse, and modified by successive innovators, and arranged into the form in which we find it described in the *Vedas*, the scripture of the Hindoos. The fundamental belief in this system of theology was in *One Supreme God*, the creator, the preserver, and the admirer of all things, and from whom every thing proceeded; but the chief deity, being considered of so holy a nature, too ineffable and sublime for the limited extent of human adoration, they therefore worshipped a great multitude of inferior gods, though of great and powerful influence in their respective capacities. The names and attributes of these divinities, both male and female, are extremely numerous, and were invoked with the most fervent piety and zeal on every occasion, wherein divine assistance was needful. The first idea of the *Trinity* seems to have originated among the Hindoos, afterwards adopted by the Persians, and subsequently by the Christians. Brama was the God of Goodness, the creator and preserver; Chiven, the malignant spirit (afterwards Satan), the God of Evil, and the destroyer; and Christna, the mediator and intercessor between the two. This character of the Trinity corresponds to that which the Greeks gave to their Zeus or Jupiter. A striking feature in this mode of worship was the doctrine of *metempsychosis*, or transmigration of souls, which was universally believed and acted upon; and so fearful were the Gentoos of destroying the intelligent principle, that they refused to eat the flesh of any animal that had lived, lest they should disturb the soul in its passage to some other body; and which parti-

cular conduct is kept up among their descendants to this day. This religion was of a most mild and amiable character, and however erroneous and absurd its doctrines may appear to us, yet, in one point, Christianity might well take a most instructive lesson in the government of its own actions. *The Brachmans*, or priests, *never allowed persecution*—all religions were equally free to hoist their several standards in the very heart of the country. Always tolerant, always conciliatory, they required no converts, but from conviction, they sought for none; they asked for none; they wished for none, and all were at liberty to depart from them to any other mode of worship which they might esteem more reasonable or more true. They believed all religions to be equally acceptable to God, assigning as a reason, that if the author of the universe preferred one sect to another, it would have been utterly improbable for any other faith but the one preferred to have been established, or to have prevailed at all. They considered *all* religions as best adapted to the several countries in which they were promulgated, and *all* when in their original purity equally acceptable to God. Christians, take a lesson from these Brachmans, these wise and worthy philosophers, whom you brand with the epithets of barbarous and superstitious—they were tolerant—be *you* so, likewise, and mankind will overlook *your* superstition.

Here, again, we find *miracles* necessary to the proof of divine origin, and accordingly they are almost numberless, and the origin of many of their gods was miraculous. One of them, Kritika, sprung from the Ganges as bright as the sun, and as beautiful as the moon; he was taken up into the stars to be nursed till he had arrived at maturity sufficient to display his attributes. With the Hindoos, it is an article of their creed, that the Vedas were not composed by a human author, but were *revealed by Brama himself*, and preserved by tradition till arranged in their present form by a sage. Christna, the mediator, afterwards the Christ of the Christians, performed an amazing number of *miracles*. On one occasion, being pursued by his enemies, and unable to escape, he *spit up a bear*, which soon dispersed his pursuers, and set him at liberty. Having, when a boy, committed some slight offence, he was reprov'd by his mother, when he desired her to examine his mouth; to her great astonishment *she beheld in it the whole universe, with all its plenitude and magnificence*. Again: the wife of his preceptor having had some of her children swallowed up by the ocean complained of it to Christna, who dived into the waters, and, *after an absence of some days, returned with the children ALIVE*, and restored them to their disconsolate mother.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF THE JEWS.

THE religion of Moses, or the Jewish theology, was first invented and promulgated by Abraham, about 1700 years before Christ,* when he went into Egypt; which journey took place about 200 years prior to the birth of Moses, when the father of the faithful quitted the idolatry which he had practised, and instituted the worship of one God. This was followed up by Moses, who, being driven out of Egypt in a time of scarcity, embraced the occasion of propagating his system in Judea, whither he retired. It was the wish of the Jewish lawgiver entirely to alienate the affections of his people from the idolatrous worship to which they had been accustomed: but their original propensities, and the commercial intercourse which subsisted between them and the mother country, rendered this a work of extreme difficulty, though every severity was executed against all who practised or in any way favoured the rites of the old religion. In the book of Exodus we find, that the Hebrews, notwithstanding the repeated admonitions of Moses against idol-worshipping, had set up a golden calf, a type of the Egyptian *Apis*, or *Bull*, as the object of their adoration, and afterwards, upon the death of Gideon, they turned again after the heathen god Baalim. Throughout the Jewish writings, numerous similar instances are met with; and after the removal of the learned men to Babylon, who became educated in the Chaldean opinions, a complete innovation took place in the original system of religion, and tenets were introduced which were wholly unknown to Moses. It was then that the Jews borrowed from Zoroaster, the Persian lawgiver, who was about contemporary with David, the ideas of a future state of rewards and punishments—the wicked and destroying spirit Satan, and the resurrection of the body. This religion cannot complain of a paucity of *miracles*, for the establishment of its authenticity; for, in the earlier part of its history, *miraculous performances* by divine interposition are continually occurring. The *miracles* which were performed before Pharaoh were numerous and extraordinary; but they seem to have had but little effect upon his belief or his conduct. *The turning of Aaron's rod into a serpent—the change of the river from water into blood—the sudden and extensive appearance of the frogs—the conversion of the dust into lice—and, the parting of the Red Sea—are all miracles* as curious and well authenticated as any that have been effected in later times. Towards the latter end of the Hebrew books, we find but little mention of *miracles*, the spirit of prophesying being then more resorted to as an assurance of the divine nature and connection

* Every reader should understand, that there is no other authority for this origin of the Jewish religion than the Bible, and that the Bible is not a historical authority, not to be authenticated by any other historical document.—R. C.

of the religion : many of which prophecies, unluckily, and by far the most important of them, *utterly failed in their accomplishment*—and those predicted events which *did* happen as they were foretold, were such as were the necessary result of the political relations in which all the neighbouring countries stood with regard to each other ; and which might easily have been prognosticated by any man acquainted with the politics of the day.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF THE GRECIANS.

GREECE being originally a colony from Egypt, naturally imbibed the prevailing system of religion of the mother country : and, accordingly, we find their theology, with some alterations, to be very similar, though from difference in language, the names of the several Deities are variously called. The attributes of Jupiter are the same as were ascribed to Osiris—and to Juno was given the same powers as were possessed by Isis. This system of theology admitted a great plurality of Gods, the names of which are so conversant to every school-boy, as to be almost unnecessary to mention here. A few will suffice : Jupiter, the King of the Gods, Master of Heaven ; Neptune, God of the Seas ; Pluto, God of Hell ; Apollo, God of Music and Poetry—with innumerable others. Goddesses also there were in abundance : Juno, the wife of Jupiter ; Venus, the Goddess of Love ; Diana, the Goddess of Hunting, &c. ; each of which were possessed of different attributes, and of great powers, though all subservient and tributary to the omnipotent Jupiter, who was represented as sitting upon a golden throne, with one hand holding a sceptre of cypress, and with the other wielding thunderbolts, ready to be discharged. His looks were majestic, and his beard long, and an eagle stood extended at his feet. The representation of this Deity was clearly taken from that of Osiris, who was also displayed as a ferocious and terrible character, bearing on his head a cap like a mitre, and holding a stick in his left hand, and in his right a whip with three thongs. The representations of several of the other Gods were so very similar to those bearing the same attribute in Egypt, that the Egyptian origin of the Grecian mythology is pretty clearly decided. This idolatrous worship was afterwards transferred to Italy, by a colony from Greece, who established a State there, which was afterwards the well-known Rome, the Greeks still pursuing their faith in its full vigour. Greece, as well as Rome, boasted of numerous learned philosophers, whose names are familiar to all, one of whom was the famous Pythagoras, who first introduced the doctrine of *metempsychosis* into Greece, whither he introduced it from the Brachmans. This philosopher invented the system of the universe, in which the sun is placed in the centre, and all the planets

moving in elliptical orbs around it, and which was afterwards brought to perfection in the 16th century. Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, and others, in Greece—and Pliny, Cicero, and Cato, among the Romans, were justly-celebrated men, and brought the philosophy of the age to great advancement and respect. The intervention of the Gods in various human undertakings were frequent and efficacious, and the miracles which they performed were numerous and striking. The miracles which are related to have been done by Jupiter alone were of extraordinary number and importance.

On one occasion, having cast his eye on a beautiful damsel, whose person he was desirous of possessing. *he transformed her into a heifer*, by which means his object was accomplished. A female named Ocyroe having divulged some of the secrets of the almighty Jupiter, which were entrusted to her, the indignant Thunderer, for her folly and presumption, *transformed her into a mare*. Numbers of others are easily to be referred to. The performance of miracles was not confined to Jupiter only, but all the different Gods and Goddesses were endowed with the same power. We read of *miracles* effected by Apollo, by Bacchus, by Minerva, and the rest, as extraordinary and powerful as those perfected by Jove; and, indeed, the greatest distinction which we can discover between Jupiter and the inferior Deities, was his power and ability to punish such of them as were disobedient to his decrees, and to assist some against the intrigues and machinations of others. Among many others, one *miracle* performed by *Bacchus* was the transformation of the Thracian women into trees for having inhumanly murdered the poet Orpheus. *Ceres*, the Goddess of Harvest, having stopped at a lowly cottage while on a journey, begged for some drink, while she was partaking of which, a boy standing by grinned in her face, and accused her of being more greedy than dry. She immediately flung the remainder of the fluid in his face, which *changed him from the human form into an eel*. A hunter named Actæon having by chance surprised the Goddess Diana while bathing, and feasted upon her charms, she, with a feeling of mortification and revenge, immediately *transformed him into a stag*, and caused him to be devoured by his own dogs. Latona, one of the mistresses of Jupiter, wandering throughout Lycia, and being a-thirst, stooped down to drink from a pool; while so doing, she was insulted by peasants, to revenge which, *she changed them all into frogs*.

The full account of these and a vast quantity of other *miracles* will be seen upon a perusal of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which contains their description in glowing and poetical language.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF THE PERSIANS.

ZOROASTER, a Bactrian philosopher, who lived about contemporary with David, was the founder of a religion the professors of which were called Ghebers, or Fire-worshippers, and which very soon spread rapidly over the East. Many of the principles of this theology are very similar to the Jewish, from which writings many ideas were derived. According to the Zendavesta, which is the doctrinal book of the Ghebers, the world was created in *six gahans*, or periods, and the order of arrangement corresponding with the account in Genesis. Like the Egyptians, they admitted a future resurrection, differing in this respect from the Jews; and while one party asserted that the soul only was immortal, the other maintained that the body also was rendered immortal. The Zoroastrians admitted two superior Gods—Ormuzd, the God of Goodness, who was formed out of the purest light, and Ahrimanes, the God of Evil, who was made from the thickest darkness. To counteract the malignant influence of the latter Deity, who was continually warring against the beneficial intentions of the former, Mithras, a mediating God, was introduced, and by whose assistance, all evil was to be entirely eradicated, and the world made happy and free from trouble. This religion has many points which have been adopted by Christianity, as the formation of a first man and woman in Paradise, in perfect goodness, till they were seduced into evil by the great Lizard; the hierarchy composed of cherubim, seraphim, &c.; the coming of the Lamb; the baptism of new-born children; extreme unction; and auricular confession; with many others. Here we find *miracles* again deemed necessary to prove the truth of a religious faith, and this, like the Egyptian, is a *miracle* in itself, being *communicated direct from Heaven* to Zoroaster, who, after he had received the divine instruction, retired into a cave and composed the Zendavesta. The materials of the system were given by God himself to the lawgiver, whom he *raised up into Heaven*, and from whence he returned to earth *with a portion of the sacred fire*, which he propagated throughout the country, causing altars to be every where erected, and lighted up with the heavenly light, and instituted an order of priesthood to take care that it was never extinguished. In the Zendavesta numerous *miracles* are recorded, which were performed by Zoroaster; and it was of frequent occurrence with him to endow with supernatural power and influence all those who were possessed of different talismans, to which he had given extraordinary and miraculous influence.

THE RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE *miracles* of Christianity come next in chronological order, and have had more numerous champions, who have taken up the pen in their cause, than any others related: upwards of 200 different sects, into which this religion has been divided, have entirely perished, and are almost unknown even in name—while as many divisions still exist to prove, both by argument and by coercion, the truth of their attested miracles. This system of worship was immediately grafted upon the Jewish, intermixed with some of the doctrines of the Persian Magi and of the Hindu mythology, the intervention of which latter is apparent in the very name of the Saviour himself, which is clearly derived from the Brachminical God Christna, or the Preserver, who rescued the world from the venomous serpent Calengam, by crushing his head, himself being wounded in the contest. From thence arose the idea of the Trinity; for, by interposing *Christna*, or *Christ*, as a mediator between the Father, known among the Hindoos by the appellation of Brama, the Creator, and according to the Persians called *Ormuzd*, the God of Light, and the malignant Spirit, or *Devil*, of the same people, *Ahrimanes*, God of Darkness, known to the Hindoos as *Chiven*, the Destroyer, was founded the grand doctrine of *Trinity in Unity*. The similitude which exists between the books of the Japanese Bonzes, and those of the Brachmans, with the New Testament, is very obvious upon a comparison, and which has been long known to the learned Missionaries in the Eastern nations, who all agree, that there is a most striking resemblance in the characteristic features of Fôt, Christna, and Jesus. The sound doctrines and moral precepts which were promulgated by Christ were directly taken from the maxims of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, who flourished 500 years prior to him—and also from the aphorisms of Pythagoras, the Greek, and Zoroaster, the Persian, both of whom lived about the same number of years anterior to Christianity: while the immoral and vicious sentiments, which are observable throughout his biography, were peculiarly his own, unborrowed and unclaimed. This system of supernatural theology, like all the preceding, has laid claim to the performance of *miracles*, and has arrogated its pretensions with the most haughty and insolent air, pronouncing eternal damnation upon all who have the audacity to call in question the truth of its origin. Presumptuous and dogmatical as are the assertions of its believers, they are not one whit more satisfactorily demonstrated than the miracles which are related to have been performed by other religions, and by the assistance of other Gods; and in a historical point of view, they are even *much less* credibly proved than some of the others. The very existence of such a being as Jesus Christ is extremely doubtful, and by no

means properly authenticated; for, with the exception of the Scriptural writings, which were written in another language, in another country, several years after the recorded events are stated to have happened, and in a contradictory manner, there are but two single passages in all the contemporary authors which mention his name, and these are, one sentence in Josephus, which is notoriously allowed by critics to be an after-addition, and a short sentence in Tacitus, which was taken from the evidence of Christian witnesses before the tribunals. But, as in this concise account, the genuineness of all historical relations are admitted as facts, the authenticity of the New Testament will be allowed upon the same grounds; because, as was stated in the outset, each system of theology should have the assistance of the same collateral aid to support its pretensions to divine origin and implicit belief. If, then, the Christian mode of worship, and the doctrinal points connected therewith, are affirmed to be unequivocally true, and established by means of extraordinary and superhuman intervention in the display of *miracles*, the same admission must be made of all other religions which have been propagated by the interposition of the same astonishing events, and which events have been as firmly believed by their respective followers, as the Christian *miracles* are defended by the most stout-hearted champion of Jesus. With any other question connected with the investigation of the subject, we have here nothing to do, this being the grand climax of the argument; and by shewing that it is built upon a sandy foundation and with a rotten basis, the veracity of the whole falls to the ground without our being at the trouble of attacking its several parts in detail. The *miracles* of Christ are so well known and so easily referred to, that it would be an useless repetition to insert many of them in this place; a few shall be mentioned, that they may stand side by side with their foreign competitors, and invite scrutiny and examination.

*The turning of water into wine—feeding the multitude with five barley-loaves, and two small fishes—the raising of Lazarus—restoring the blind to sight—and the resurrection and ascension—*are well known to all Testament-readers. Since the age of the Apostles, Protestant believers maintain that no *miracles* whatever have been since performed, and that all supernatural power expired with those holy men; but the Catholics, who are by far the greater number of the followers of Christ, as stoutly assert, that they are to this day, and have been since the commencement of their religion, of continual occurrence.*

* St. Augustine tells us, that, in the city of Hippo, there were 70 miracles performed in the space of two years connected with the building of a chapel in honour of St. Stephen; and St. Dunstan, we are told, actually pulled the Devil's nose with a pair of tongs. So necessary indeed was the performance of miracles to the character of a Saint, that the old Catholics allowed none to be such, but those who had distinguished themselves by supernatural power.

To reconcile these great points of opposition is impossible; and the only thing which can be said in its defence is, that neither party is acquainted with what its religion is.

RELIGION AND MIRACLES OF MAHOMET.

THE religion instituted by Mahomet was next ushered upon the political stage; and though for a short period it gained but few converts to its doctrines, yet, finally, it spread with immense rapidity, numbering as many followers in one hundred years, as Christianity has been able to boast of for eighteen hundred. The fundamental principle of this worship is the *Unity of God*, to restore which, in purity of idea, was stated by Mahomet to be the reason of his mission upon earth. That there could be but one orthodox religion was a grand tenet of the Arabian prophet, and he endeavoured, by the precepts which he inculcated, to impress the minds of all men with the same belief. Without denying the divine mission of Christ, he asserted that he himself was a subsequent and a greater prophet, sent by the Almighty to perfect and firmly establish the only true system of theology. During twenty-three years, Mahomet was employed in dealing out slowly and separately, chapter by chapter, the system he was about to establish, and he produced them to his disciples as the genuine word of God, dictated by the Almighty himself: and, certainly, for beauty of sentiment, and elegance of diction, they have never been surpassed by any other of the revealed writings. With so much reverence and awe is this sacred volume held by the Mussulmen, that they dare not lay a hand upon it without having previously undergone a purification; and it is even said, that it is a crime punishable with death for a Christian to touch it. The materials of which the Koran is composed are obviously stolen from the Jewish and Christian writers, whose theological tenets it followed about five hundred years. It is also much intermixed with allegorical tales and legendary anecdotes which were current in eastern countries.

MIRACLES were thought by Mahomet, as well as by all the former founders of a new sect, to be an indispensable article necessary to the proving and settling the divine nature of his system, and accordingly we find them interspersed throughout the pages of the Koran, though not in so great a number as in the New Testament. The grand, astonishing, and incontrovertible *miracle* to which the Koran lays claim is *itself*, being so pure, holy, so clearly bearing the marks of authenticity throughout its composition, that none but the Almighty power of God himself could have been the author of it: and when it is considered that Mahomet was a man without learning or endowments, it was impossible he could have written it.

Among the dogmas of Islamism, however, other minor miraculous events are recorded, among which are the 24,000 visits of the *Angel Gabriel to the Prophet*—that *Mahomet travelled in one night through 90 Heavens, mounted upon the animal called Borak, one half woman and one half horse—that he walked in the sunshine without producing a shadow, as ordinary mortals do—he caused trees and vegetation which had withered and decayed, to resume their verdure, and sprout out with freshness, as in the spring—that being on a journey, and wanting water, he caused the empty wells and cisterns, which had been parched up with the drought, to gush forth with pure and wholesome water—and that he cut the body of the moon into two equal parts.* The examination of the last established religion which has figured in the world having been effected, it remains merely to state in general terms, without commentary or argument, that *if miracles prove Christianity to be true, they also prove all religions to be equally true*—as it is generally admitted, there can be but *one true religion*, it necessarily follows, that not one is true.

TO MR. R. CARLILE.

SIR,

THERE seems to me something in Atheism so repugnant to the moral feelings of civilized man, that I sincerely doubt whether such a character as a real Atheist ever existed within the whole range of the human species. That you and many other individuals have openly denied the existence of a God, is not disputed; but whether pride, vain-glory, an affectation to be thought more wise and penetrating than others, have not induced them to make this gloomy boast, in which the decisions of the head are at variance with the dictates of the heart, may be considered as highly problematical.

Without recurring to the theories of Epicurus, Lucretius, Hobbes, or Spinoza, it may be safely asserted, that among our modern professing Atheists many have been found, such as your correspondent, "O. O." and others, who resolve all the phenomena in the universe into matter, motion, chemical affinities and repugnances, attraction, repulsion, and simple or complex organization. Intrenched under these scientific terms, which have an imposing appearance, they advance their theories with an overbearing confidence, as though truth could be laid under an obligation to impudence.

Deluded by these specious reasonings of men, who,

" ———— having found his instrument, forget,
Or disregard, or, more presumptuous still,
Deny the power that wields it"—

many, unaccustomed to deep researches, have found themselves bewildered in metaphysical labyrinths, from which they have discovered no way to escape. Whenever the disbelief of the being of a God gains the ascendancy in the mind, the foundations of morals, of virtue, and of duty, and of obligation, are swept aside. A full conviction that there is a God, holy, wise, and just, links man to eternity, and keeps alive, even in the otherwise most degenerate breast, a consciousness of future responsibility.

In answer to the question proposed by you, "What is God?" proofs of which you seem so anxious to obtain, and yet defy all the talent and learning of the age to convince you of the existence of such a Being, I submit the following sheets to your consideration; and to the attention of such of your readers who *profess* to entertain similar notions with yourself. Lord Bacon has somewhere said, "That a little philosophy inclineth men's minds to Atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion."

That there is a great First Cause of all finite existence, to whom contingencies and imperfections are alike inapplicable, results from the following propositions. But as the terms *necessity* and *contingent* frequently occur, it will be proper to explain the manner in which they are used.

In these propositions, that, and that only, is considered to be *necessary* which cannot be perceived, either to be non-existent, or to exist differently from what it is, without involving a contradiction. That, on the contrary, is *contingent*, which either may be, or may not be, without involving any contradiction.

These terms thus understood, it follows, that every being and thing that is in existence, or that is possible, must be either *necessary* or *contingent*; because, in this respect, these two modes of existence embrace all that are possible and all that are real.

That which is *contingent*, might possibly not have existed, otherwise it would not be contingent; because the possibility of non-existence is included in our idea of contingency; and it is this possibility of non-existence that distinguishes contingent existence from necessary existence.

That, which might possibly not have been, cannot always actually have been; otherwise its non-existence would have been impossible: and if any Being, or substance, has always existed, that Being, or substance, could never have been contingent, because contingency implies a beginning, and also the possibility of actual non-existence.

That which is in its own nature contingent, and which has, on this account, not always been in actual existence, must, admitting it to exist, have had some cause of its existence; and consequently, the primary cause of all contingent existence must have been eternal.

That which has actually existed from eternity, cannot be contingent, because it cannot possibly have had a cause, or have ad-

mitted one ; and no Being, or substance, actually existing, that thus necessarily excludes a cause, can resemble in its mode of existence those things and beings which have had a beginning.

That which is not contingent, and which has existed eternally, being without the possibility of a cause, must exist necessarily.

The First Cause of all contingent beings and things must exist necessarily ; because, being prior to all beginning of existence, the possibility of its being contingent is excluded by its eternity.

The First Cause, existing necessarily, must have had its nature, which contains the aggregate of all its attributes, whatever they are, independently of all causes ; because not one of these attributes can be contingent ; and, consequently, all its essential attributes must exist necessarily.

These attributes could not have been different from what they are ; because if any difference be admitted to have been possible, something must have determined their present state of existence ; and, in this case, they must be contingent.

An attribute that has limits, must have been determined to such limits as it has, by some cause ; but that attribute which is without any cause, must also be without limits.

That which is without limits, must be absolutely perfect in itself, according to its nature. The First Cause of every being and thing that had a beginning, and all its attributes, being necessarily existent, must therefore be absolutely perfect.

As the First Cause, and all the attributes of this First Cause, whatever they are, must exist necessarily, contingency cannot possibly reach them. Nothing can belong to its nature that includes any contingency. Hence every thing that is essential to its nature must belong to it necessarily. And because both its nature and its attributes must necessarily be beyond the reach of contingency, every thing that is not *necessarily* included in its nature, must necessarily be excluded from it.

All defects ; all imperfections ; all wants ; all liabilities to accident and error, and all ignorance, are excluded *necessarily*, because they are contingencies, and cannot possibly exist in that cause, from which, by the nature of its existence, all contingencies are necessarily excluded. No absolute perfection can be contingent, because if contingent it would then include a beginning, and want independence ; and therefore could not be absolute. All perfections that are not contingent must be eternal, because they are not contingent ; and must be necessarily existent, because they are eternal. All eternal perfections must be immutable, because they are independent and eternal. All perfections which are thus eternal, independent, necessarily existent, and immutable, must coincide with the nature of that cause, which is eternal, independent, necessarily existent and immutable. No absolute perfection can, therefore, be excluded necessarily from that nature with which it coincides ; and contingency cannot possibly reach that

which is eternal. Every thing must be necessary in itself, the reverse of which is absolutely impossible ; and every thing must actually exist, the non-existence of which will involve a contradiction.

All absolute perfections must necessarily be consistent with the nature of the first cause of contingent beings and things, because they coincide with it. If, therefore, all those absolute perfections, which, in themselves, as perfections, are necessarily existent, independent, eternal, and immutable, are not *necessarily* included in the nature of this Being, with which nature they coincide, and with which they are consistent, they must be necessarily excluded, because they are not subject to contingency. But to suppose these perfections to be excluded *necessarily* from the nature of that Being with which they coincide and are consistent, as to suppose the exclusion to be *necessary*, while their coincidence and consistency of nature prove the reverse : we shall, therefore, be conducted to this absurdity ; that the exclusion is *necessary*, and not necessary at the same time.

As, therefore, that must actually be, the reverse of which will involve a contradiction ; and as that must be necessary of itself, the reverse of which is absolutely impossible ; as nothing but a necessary exclusion can prevent all absolute perfections from being included in the nature of this cause with which they coincide, because nothing contingent can be attributed to it ; and as this *necessary exclusion* cannot be conceived, without involving a contradiction, it follows, that every absolute perfection must be both actually and necessarily included in its nature.

Omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immensity, eternity, infinite knowledge, infinite wisdom, and infinite goodness, are in themselves absolute perfections which are immutable and eternal. These coincide with the nature of that cause which exists necessarily, and in which they must necessarily be included. As all power, which either has begun, or which can hereafter begin, must be contingent, and must therefore have a primary cause that is not contingent, so this cause must be already in existence, and must include in its nature all power that is possible ; and that cause which includes all possible power must necessarily be omnipotent. And as this primary cause of contingent existence must be without a cause, and must therefore exist necessarily, it cannot but be eternal, necessarily existent and independent.

That cause which exists necessarily, must exist universally : otherwise the place in which it does not exist, will prove that it has limits ; and its non-existence in any given place will demonstrate that it does not exist necessarily. Let it be granted, that any cause exists necessarily, and the universality of its existence follows as a necessary consequence. A being or cause that exists universally, is a being or cause that is omnipresent. That being or cause which can do every thing that is possible, and that ex-

ists every where, must be capable of seeing every thing that is possible: and that which possesses this power of discernment must be omniscient.

That which can do and see every thing that is possible must have all possible knowledge and wisdom; and this universal knowledge and wisdom which are eternal, and which extend to all possibilities, must be infinite knowledge, and infinite wisdom.

All goodness that either began, or that can possibly begin, must be contingent, and must require a primary cause that must have existed eternally; because this primary cause of all contingent goodness cannot be contingent. And this eternal cause, which comprehends all possible goodness, must be infinite good.

Similar conclusions may be drawn even from contingent existence. All substances, that either have begun, or that may hereafter begin to exist, must be contingent; and therefore they demand a primary cause that never began. This cause must be a substance; because nothing less than a substance could create substances: it must be incorporeal, because matter, being limited in the extent of its existence, can neither be eternal nor necessarily existent. Hence it follows, that the first cause of all contingent existence must exist necessarily: and, consequently, that all absolute perfection must necessarily be included in its nature.

The subject of my next paper will be, "Thoughts on the Indestructibility and Eternity of Matter."

HOMO.

London, Nov. 17, 1826.

METAPHYSICS.*

From the Scotsman, Nov. 11, 1826.

WE entreat our readers not to take fright at our title. Our object is to show that the term—"Metaphysics"—should be no bugbear: and that it really does not mean a collection of useless and annoying subtleties. Such an opinion, we are aware, has been too industriously circulated; and we regret that it has found its way into respectable, and what may even be called educated society. This, we suspect, has arisen from indolence or ignorant impatience; since, when properly understood, the science of metaphysics will, we cannot doubt, be allowed to be of all others the most useful and dignified.

Technically, this is the branch of philosophy which treats of

* It should have been PHYSICS, if the word METAPHYSICS be allowed to retain its old definition, something *beyond physics*.—R. C.

being generally—of cause, effect, action, passion : but in the larger and more proper sense, it is *the philosophy of the human mind*,—embracing, of course, the phenomena of sensation, intellectual and moral feeling, the laws of belief, and, consequently, morals and religion. It is the science of mind,—and as mind is the seat of all knowledge and feeling—of gaiety and depression—hope and fear—pain and pleasure—grief and joy—it is absurd as well as untrue to pretend that man has nothing to do with metaphysics, or the laws of his own being.

In point of fact, metaphysics is the highest of all studies, and in all ages, it has also been the most interesting. We think it extremely doubtful whether there ever was a man gifted with genius,—none certainly who was so much as touched with the spirit of philosophy,—who did not, in early life, engage in some speculations concerning intellect, the soul, matter. It is impossible to dip into the literature of our own or any other country, without encountering metaphysical discussion. The history of our species, when duly considered, is more that of opinion than action ; since the former has been the mainspring of the latter. It is on the nature of the opinions held by them, and the manner in which they are regulated, that the happiness of nations and individuals depends.

It would be unfortunate, therefore, if the province of metaphysics were to be neglected. But the thing is impossible. We can have no opinions of our own, without coming into contact, or what often happens, conflict, with the opinions of others. The most recluse experience this in the literature which is consulted by them : for diversity of opinion is to be met with equally in books as in real life. But diversity of opinion generates reflection : and reflection is always metaphysical study more or less perfect. We have thus numerous metaphysicians who would startle at the appellation. Emotion, belief, opinion of every description, are, as we have stated, to be found only in the mind ; and it is by attending to *mental feelings*, and mental changes, in connection with those external circumstances and relations which observation shews to be connected with them, that we discover the laws and tendencies which affect and regulate both sentiment and conduct. Who, then, will say that this is a study which is really of no importance?

The science of metaphysics embraces all other science. It may have been, it has been, prosecuted in a wrong direction. Every thing human is imperfect ; but the due application of all other science depends on metaphysics being understood and properly cultivated : for this, being the science which deals with the foundations of human belief, should be the great modifier and regulator of opinion. It takes cognizance of language, or conventional terms—the means by which all knowledge is communicated, and through which all discussion or controversy is main-

tained. It concerns itself more especially with opinions—embracing, in this department, morals and religion—and, by tracing opinion in all its shades and changes, it converts history into philosophy. Language and opinion are thus made to throw much light upon each other—the imperfection of language having, under the influence of the passions, led often to the most fatal differences of opinion; while the history of opinion, again, led ultimately to the correction and improvement of language—attention being paid, ultimately, more to original notions, sentiments, or principles, than to words. By these means, words or terms have been rendered more definite, and better fitted for the purpose of recording and interchanging opinions.

The benefits which metaphysics, or the philosophy of mind, has thus conferred on society, are incalculable. It has shewn, in many instances, that differences about which men were in the practice of carrying each other to the stake, arose from misconception, or were the fruits of ignorance and prejudice; and that by recurring to first principles, it was readily seen, from what, on consideration of these principles, was obviously due from each to all, that there was no room even for angry controversy, far less for crimination and punishment. It is the great province of metaphysics indeed, to dispel prejudice—to form and nourish a calm, tolerant, and liberal spirit. The profound metaphysician should be at once the most elevated, the most humble, and the most candid of his species. The purity of his designs should confer elevation; the recollection of the aberrations of other minds, and the consciousness of imperfection, should induce humility: and the obvious fact that there is yet a great mass of prejudice to be overcome, a great extent of knowledge to be attained, should produce candour, while it stimulates to renewed exertions.

It is pretty clear, we think, from what has been stated, that no one can be considered an educated person who is not a metaphysician: and beyond all others, the legislator, who is so often called upon to deal with the opinions of others, ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the history of opinions, or in other words, with the philosophy of the human mind. The teachers of religion have always professed to be metaphysicians—sometimes wretched ones, it is true—but still it was with the weapons furnished by this philosophy that they accomplished the Reformation—it was with the same weapons that the victories in favour of toleration were achieved: and it is through this philosophy also that religious liberty, in contradistinction to toleration, will yet be established. Theories of morals, and doctrines in religion, are, it may be said, daily thrust out upon the world. It is the province of metaphysics to say what are mere renovations or disguisements of old and refuted opinions, what are original, what fallacious, contradictory, or unsound. The disciples of the mental philosophy are inured to close and severe thinking. They detect readily what is loose, declamatory; sophistical; they would be ashamed of arguments merely specious, or which, from being addressed to existing prejudices or passions, cannot outlive the modes of the time; for there are fashions in thinking as well as in dress; but the metaphysician distinguishes betwixt the permanent and the temporary, the sound and the factitious; and, des-

pising momentary popularity or consequence, he seizes on what is true, and elucidates and defend it. What he dreads most is that turn of mind which, as Dr. Brown has very happily observed,—“by representing error as the termination of every speculative pursuit, seduces the faculties into a luxurious slothfulness, which prefers a rapid succession of brilliant paradoxes, to truths of a more lasting and general utility, but of more laborious search.” What he pursues fearlessly is truth; and this he is most anxious to place under the direction of goodness—wanting which he will pay no reverence either to intellect or power. Nor can his labours have any end; for although the variety and originality of the present is generally lessened in proportion to our knowledge of the past, yet an advance made in any other science, or in any art, affords him new means of testing, correcting, or illustrating his own doctrines. The true metaphysician is always learning—never sufficiently taught—and so far from wasting his intellectual strength on mere subtleties, he is a master in his science only in the degree in which he subjects all his proceedings to the direction of *good sense*.

We have only, we are aware, glanced at a subject to which, if justice be done, we must recur more than once; but if we have succeeded, either in correcting a wrong impression, or in exciting the attention of one ingenious mind to the subject, we shall not consider our present notice as having been written in vain.

TO MR. CARLILE.

MR. CARLILE,

I SEE through the medium of your “Republican,” that not only yourself but one of your correspondents, (named) Shebago, denies the existence of a God, and in a triumphant manner, asks—Who made God? In order, as I suppose, to get some one or other who believes in the doctrine of Christianity, to give an answer. Although, I flatter myself, that I could give such an answer which you or your correspondent might not not think of; yet I shall not think myself bound to do so, unless I have an answer to the following questions which I shall propose to you and your correspondent for consideration.

G. KNIGHT.

Admitting the hypothesis that there is no God, in what way or manner was the world formed; from whence proceeded man; and what contributed to make the difference in the sexes?

TO MR. G. KNIGHT.

SIR,

I AM so very wise, as to be able, without shame, to tell you, that I cannot answer your questions; but again, are you, before you ask those questions, sure, that the world has been formed, and that man has proceeded?

Respectfully,

R. CARLILE.

62, Fleet Street, November 22, 1826.

CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.

TWENTY-FOUR PLAIN QUESTIONS TO HONEST MEN.

QUESTION 1. Have you ever inquired into the foundations of your religion?

QUES. 2. Are you sure that the Bible was written by the persons who are said to have written it?

QUES. 3. And that *they* had authority to write what they did?

QUES. 4. And that *you* have got a faithful translation of what they wrote?

QUES. 5. And if what they wrote was a revelation to themselves, does *that* make it a revelation to you?

QUES. 6. If you receive it in faith, might you not receive the Koran, the Shaster, or any other books which have been falsely called the word of God, in faith also?

QUES. 7. Do you not know that there have been many false religions in the world, by which mankind have been mischievously and cruelly deceived?

QUES. 8. How came they to be so deceived; but by acting as you do, if you do not inquire for yourself, or if you suffer any persons to discourage you from exercising your own reason?

QUES. 9. Is not God the author of your reason?

QUES. 10. Can He then be the author of any thing which is contrary to your reason?

QUES. 11. "If reason be a sufficient guide, why should God give you any other?"

QUES. 12. "If it be not a sufficient guide, why has he given you *that*?"

QUES. 13. If you ask the question which it is your duty as a man to ask of your Christian Ministers, will *they* answer you?

QUES. 14. Will they not treat both you and your questions with contempt?

QUES. 15. Is contempt an answer?

QUES. 16. They profess to "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh them a reason of the hope that is in them." 1 Peter iii. 15. and "In meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves." 2 Tim. ii. 25. How does their conduct agree with their professions?

QUES. 17. Does it look like sincerity and truth, that your Ministers should have so much to say, where nobody may answer them; but have nothing to say where they may be answered; defending their Gospel, where nobody may be allowed to attack

it, but afraid and ashamed to undertake its defence where it may be likely to meet an adversary?

QUES. 18. Does it look like sincerity and truth that your Missionaries should "compass sea and land to make one proselyte" from among barbarians, while they affect to treat thousands of their unbelieving countrymen with contempt and scorn?

QUES. 19. And that they should insult you with their Societies and Colleges for training scholars for the Ministry, when there is not one of them who dare come forward in an assembly, where he may be likely to meet a better scholar than himself?

QUES. 20. Do you believe every part and tittle of the Bible? If you do not, you are an unbeliever yourself: "whosoever shall offend in one point is guilty of the whole." James ii. 10. "He that doubteth, is damned." Rom. xiv. 23.

QUES. 21. Do you find those who believe the Bible, much better men than those who do not?

QUES. 22. Who are they who first believe the Christian religion—but children and persons of weak understanding; and who are they who reject it, but shrewd and clever men, yourself being judge?

QUES. 23. On which side does the suspicion of prejudice and interest lie strongest: the professors of Christianity in this country pocketing nearly £.10,000,000 a year, &c. &c. &c. and yet shrinking from the light of Free Discussion—the opponents of Christianity renouncing all interested motives, courting inquiry, and earnestly calling upon you to come and hear, and answer if you can the convincing arguments by which they prove its falsehood?

QUES. 24. If Christianity be true, why are you afraid to trust it to public investigation?

COME, HEAR, AND JUDGE?

I am your assured Friend,
ROBERT TAYLOR, A. B. of St. John's, Cambridge,
Orator of the Christian Evidence Society, and
late Minister of Midhurst.

Christian Evidence Society,
London, Nov. 17, 1826.

ANSWER TO HOMO.

THE *homo*, or man, who finds repugnance in a word that has a mere negative meaning, has something very repugnant in his state of mind that wants correction. Atheism is a negative of an unproved hypothesis: and just repugnancy is only applicable to

a hypothesis that produces nothing but mischief from the want of proof. Let there be proof, and there will be no dissent. In no instance, among the jarring dispositions of mankind, has dissent and proof been associated. All our disputes are about undefined and unintelligible words, and not about things that admit of definition and proof. The "pride, vain glory, and affectation to be thought more wise and penetrating than others," lies not with the negative side of an unproved and unproveable hypothesis; but with the affirmative. A Theist makes certain statements about a phantom which he calls God: an Atheist humbly and wisely says, I cannot be so affected as to boast of knowledge where I have it not; I cannot assent to your conclusions, because you confess them to be beyond such evidences as can be brought to human senses. My conclusion has no pride in it, except it be the pride of truth and honesty, a determination not to be deceived. Your's is the pride of inventing a cause for all the phenomena that surround us, for which you cannot otherwise account. You are not satisfied to share my humility and confess your ignorance of the cause or foundation of those phenomena, your dogma expresses that you will make a God that shall cloak your ignorance, encourage your idleness and want of research, and be called the maker of all things; a sort of *factotum*, in which you may enwrap yourself and say, "Here will I rest, whether right or wrong." I say, not knowing, I will enquire; I will ask the Theist, WHAT IS GOD? You answer, "How dare you to disturb my reverie, my mental repose, by asking a question that cannot be answered, by carrying your enquiries beyond the customs of mankind." I reply, that your revery and mental repose constitute stupidity. The human mind is adapted for constant enquiry and should rest no where in doubt. And how dare you to impose a deception upon me and others who wish not to cease from enquiry? Could you answer the question, WHAT IS GOD? you would rush forth to do it triumphantly; we should have had no nonsense about necessitous contingency or a contingent necessity. If you look again you may discover that your contingent existence is involved in your necessary existence. That which doth exist, doth exist necessarily; for necessity expresses nothing more than the consequent of causes. Where there is a cause there is a consequent.

Your mere play upon abstruse words proves nothing. Go to, and examine the things about you, if you would prove any thing about deity, and not rest on words which you cannot define and which another person cannot understand. It is not enough to tell us that we are surrounded by phenomena and that therefore there is a greater phenomenon as the cause; the point at which we pronounce the existence of phenomena should be the point for our humility to commence, the point at which we should express our ignorance and not our arrogance and dogmatism, in saying

that there is a God and that he has done this, that and the other thing.

When Homo says, "wherever the disbelief of the being of a God gains the ascendancy in the mind, the foundation of morals is swept aside;" he says, in effect, that an unproved hypothesis is the foundation of morals, in effect, that morals are founded on a dogmatical lie! Not so, Homo. Morals are founded in reciprocal interests, in social relations, they have a higher origin, a better foundation, than a belief in a God; they are founded in our gain, interest, or self-love.

The question WHAT IS GOD? must have better answers than this from Homo, before an enquiring mind can be satisfied. I confess that his logic is Sanscrit to me. I cannot understand what he would convey.

R. C.

NOTE WRITTEN IN DORCHESTER GAOL, AS A FINISH TO THE CORRESPONDENCE WITH J. E. C.

THE effects of the motions of matter are an insatiable variety of identities, each so unlike the other, that it is scarcely possible to find two identities without a distinguishing mark in each; whilst some approach so near to a likeness, that it is difficult to distinguish them; yet close observation yields distinction. It is of those identities that we can alone speak; that which we call the whole of matter, or the universe, is a mere phrase to cover our ignorance, to say that beyond a certain point we are ignorant. We must of necessity remain ignorant of the peculiar cause of the milky way, of the various nebulae, and of other planetary phenomena, too remote from our view for correct conclusions as to cause and properties. But the continued sameness of these phenomena argues fixed laws; whilst the laws of will, design, intelligence, are ever variable, and variableness is the only distinguishing mark of intelligence. In what we can see of the identities about us, we see nothing but a regular sameness of process: though varieties be produced, there is no variableness in the producing power: its principles of action are uniform, and being uniform, evidently designless. Giving design to superhuman power, is but to harmonize it; for what can design do after it is possessed? What can human design accomplish, to lead us to attribute the capacity to superhuman beings? It accomplishes nothing more than the gratification of its own passions and fancies, without producing any immediate general good. There is nothing so momentous in the capacity of design, as to be worthy of being attributed to a superior and sublime idea of a God or Idol.

R. C.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE REPUBLICAN."

SIR,

I PERCEIVE with much regret, the account you have published of the death of Richard Hassell, whom, though I knew him not personally, I respect by reputation. Your eulogy of him is just and appropriate. And his having sprung from the lower ranks of life is an additional merit, and a proof, at the same time, that gift of genius does not descend by hereditary right to the sons of the titled, the wealthy, or even of the intelligent—but breaks out here and there in all ranks and conditions, among the children of the wise and of the foolish, by the sportive play of Nature in the production of infinite variety. So that the vile assertion of the late Parson Whitaker, that the clever children of all the poor round Oxford must be the gownsmen's bastards, is not true.

Seriously speaking, I have generally observed, that our greatest geniuses, as Ferguson, Burns, and others, have sprung from the working orders; and my explanation is this, that where they have natural genius, they have also the manifest advantage of a simple education, free from the prejudices of superstition, and unstained by that love of wealth, and the unbridled cupidity which makes the sons of the higher orders barter their independence and the steady and unprejudiced pursuit of truth, for the loaves and fishes offered by Superstition, and only to be obtained by a mean subserviency to popular prejudices, and an attachment to fanatical institutions. I suggest to your readers who have leisure, to form a *Calendar of Genius* for every day in the year, in which each day should be dedicated to some antagonist of Superstition, or to some distinguished friend of Humanity, with short notices of their lives and origin, not omitting due mention of the martyrs to the cause of Liberty, who have undergone fine, imprisonment, and other ill usage.

Your's, &c.

Nov. 19, 1826.

PHILO.

 WILLIAM ALLEN IN ANSWER TO RICHARD CARLILE,
 IN ANSWER TO A LATE PAMPHLET.

SIR,

I SHOULD be strongly tempted to accept your challenge, did I not feel, that to enter into a discussion with you were to degrade my understanding, by the mere attempt to reason with one who is ignorant of the first principles of sound logic. If there were a Deity in existence, and if it were possible to prove it, could it be

shewn to one wholly destitute of the power of conducting or following an argument ; and who concerning those things which lie beneath his notice, manifests an entire disregard to the first principles of sound reasoning.

You say, p. 24. " Finding *IT* under some peculiar states, you do not object to calling *IT* the *sole Being*." This *it* relates to the word *matter*, a little above.

Now, by this *matter*, do you mean any thing more that you find, than " your *sensations* and your *ideas*" of solidity, extension, figure, colour, &c. You say, *yes*. I ask *where* do you ? For the three first qualities, you will not deny that you *FEEL*, and the last that you *SEE* ; where then is there any thing besides feeling and sight, the perception of touch and vision ? You are aware of the force of this objection to *finding* matter in any state different from an " *idea of sensation*," and you say that you *overcome* it by " perceiving that though our knowledge of matter is ideal, there could have been no idea without the previous existence of the matter to form it." Here is your bad logic ; pray, if *matter* be ideal, how could it at the same time exist antecedently to its idea, in order to cause it ? Your " knowledge of matter," that is, I suppose, your knowledge of its qualities, is *ideal*, then those qualities *previous* to their ideality, cannot exist as the *causes* of their ideality : this sort of rebutting of the power of a strong position, is a poor kind of *victory* over it. When you know better, where you find matter that *sole Being*, and when you can better frame an argument than permit it to involve a contradiction, it will be time enough to say something of any other, which ignorant people conceive may possibly exist, and which they think they *find* as easily as you do your *MATTER*. Again, you say, " that you *conclude* that *matter* is the necessary foundation of the idea : but your *conclusion* is not supported by any *premises* whatever. And I ask, if you can *fight a battle* in a dream, how do you know, that *resistance* and *motion*, at any time, are more than ideas ? Where are the proofs of it ? Certain it is, that if you believe the existence of any thing but your own ideas, you condescend to believe in things as *invisible* and as *intangible* as Deity can be, for *touch* and *vision* are *sensations*, and you cannot *touch* or *see* any thing that is *not touch* or *sight*, it is a *contradiction in terms*.

The next bit of infamous logic is, " Imagination cannot exist until *ideas*, or mind, has been once formed by *observations* on matter." Now, how can there be *observation* previous to *ideas* ? The sentence contains so obvious a *circle*, a child might defeat the fallacy.

P. 29. " What is *intelligence* *DISTINCT* from the life of an animal." I ask you, is it in an *animal* when dead ? No, say you. Is it in *life* separated from an animal ?* No, you will say again. Then if it be in *neither*, how can it be in both ? Nothing can come

* I know nothing of life separated from an animal, except it be vegetable life.—
R. C.

of nothing. "Speak again." I do not say that your question cannot be answered, but I doubt much if you can answer mine like a philosopher.

You say: "Is your God an animal?" I ask, was your father an animal? If you say yes you speak irreverently, but it will not prevent his being a conscious being, and perhaps wiser than yourself. What, and if the *arranged matter* of the whole universe, being under a constant and regular motion, forms the intelligence of so great a being, that yours can as little conceive of it, as your powers of *touch* and *sight* can find its *state* of uncircumscribed extension, or its immeasurable distance from your short sighted optics? Take heed, lest there might be such "*an animal*," for if he be not so kind as his best friends make him, he might, being angry, answer your profane question, convince you of his existence, by acting on your "*ideas*," and your "*sensations*" in a manner even less agreeable than by the being crushed in a storm.

P. 31.—"Mind is the common *property* of animal sensations." I do not believe that you know the meaning of this sentence yourself. How can any noun *substantive* be the *quality*, the accident, the adjective of another set of nouns substantive? You might as well say the *house* is the *property* of the stones, wood, and mortar used in the building of it, or that *the cart you put before the horse* is the property of the horse. If mind be the *property* of sensations, I ask, of what are *sensations* the property? If you say of a *body* a *matter*; I shall humbly propose an amendment of terms; for *that* of which sensations are the property I would rather call *mind* than *body*. Yet, if this term be objected to, I would call it by an Algebraic sign *a*, rather than by *body*; *ab*.—perhaps all solid extension *feels*, I chuse to call the immediate reason for the different capacity by the term, *a*, a mind; for I may call perfectly different *capacities* by different nouns substantive if I chuse, it being a privilege generally used in most languages so to do.

P. 26.—"We have no dispute about objects, that are tangible." Have you not read then, Hume, Stewart, Reid, &c., where there are constant disputes about them—but especially, if *tangible* extension be an idea, or not an idea; whether smoothness and roughness, heat and cold are in the mind or out of it; what signifies all experimental philosophy, unless you know *without dispute* to what object qualities belong? Do you know so well of this, as to answer these authors and settle their disputes? Can you answer them also, why you *expect* the experiment of yesterday or to-day will bear the same result to-morrow? Can you tell them, what are the laws of nature and how you know they are *invariable*? Can you acquaint them in what way you can *detect*, by *any experiment*, the presence of like compound aggregates, so as to be sure you have only like objects present? Surely these questions belong to the *tangible* objects of physics. Yet I doubt

if you can answer them or settle their disputes. I dare say you might appeal, in a summary way, to your *experience*, but I must take so far the fact of those authors as to conceive that your experience of the *past* is not their knowledge of the future. As well might I suppose that the *little round* of your ideas were the *all* of which nature was full; that there were no *sea*, because some one had travelled on land without arriving in his experience at water: that there were no *sun*, because he had never stirred from the chimney-corner, or from the light of a taper in a dungeon: or, if there were, its warmth and brilliancy must be kindled by human artifice and be its *property*.

Then, of motion, what absurd shifts do you condescend to make about it! How can the essential property of any subject be equal to *rest* and *motion* too? If matter held an inward *principle of motion*, then a *principle of rest* must be *extraneous* to it; for *rest* and *motion* cannot go on both together without a *variety* in their *cause*, and tread the circle which your syllogism concerning it does!

But if *matter* can be *at rest*, all matter (to any one who can abstract) is essentially at rest; and if it be found in motion the whole impulse equal to it is extraneous to it, both as to its beginning and direction. Nevertheless, the beginner and director of motion and matter shall not be called God, unless, *like us*, it could be proved, that it intentionally directed it to such ends, which I am not prepared to admit, seeing I walk because I have feet; and that I see because I have eyes; and that *feet* and *eyes* came probably by a *chance* direction of motion in those quarters!

I shall permit myself but one question more. If in metaphysics *all* is dogma; *all* is error, why do you use them? I suspect you cannot know the meaning of the word, or would be aware, that without the metaphysical doctrine of *cause*, there could be no result on which to depend, either in *experimental* or *mathematical* philosophy; and that to argue against Deity requires a shrewder mind than to argue for him, a logical mode of reasoning, and an acumen, which depends upon their rules and properties, and in a higher degree than you possess, in order to establish a conviction of his non-existence to any but yourself.

If you think proper, you may place these observations in the title-page to your next edition of your pamphlet.—I am, &c. A.

THE KING'S SPEECH.

THE following is the KING'S SPEECH to the NEW PARLIAMENT of old faces, and we have the confession of Mr. Canning, that omissions constitute its grace and wisdom, that it is so framed as to express *nothing* on which a debate could be raised! Might not the King as well have kept at home by his fire-side at Windsor as to have made a pompous procession to the House of Lords to read such a written paper? From all professions made to this time, there appears to be no intention on the part of the Ministers, to take any steps that shall effectually relieve the distresses of the people. Finding so barren a speech from the throne, I have published for twopence a *super royal speech* upon half-a-sheet of *fool's cap*.

R. C.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I have called you together at this time for the special purpose of communicating to you the measure, which I judged it necessary to take in the month of September, for the admission into the ports of the United Kingdom of certain sorts of Grain not then admissible by law.

I have directed a copy of the Order in Council issued on that occasion to be laid before you: and confidently trust, that you will see sufficient reason for giving your sanction to the provisions of that Order, and for carrying them into effectual execution.

I have the greatest satisfaction in being able to inform you that the hopes entertained at the termination of the last Session of Parliament, respecting the final close of the Burmese war, have been fulfilled, and that a peace, highly honourable to the British arms and Councils of the British Government in India, has been concluded in that quarter.

I continue to receive, from all the Foreign Powers, assurances of their earnest desire to cultivate the relations of Peace with each other, and a friendly understanding with this nation.

I have exerted myself with unremitting anxiety, in conjunction with my Allies, to arrest the progress of the existing hostilities, and to prevent the interruption of peace throughout the world.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

I have directed the estimates, for the ensuing year, to be made out, and in due time they shall be laid before you. I assure you, they are framed with the strictest attention to economy, which the exigencies of the public service will permit.

The distress which has prevailed throughout the commercial and manufacturing districts of my subjects, during the last twelve months, has affected some important branches of the revenue, yet I have great satisfaction in informing you, that no such diminution of the internal consumption of the country has taken place, as can possibly create any apprehension that the great sources of the wealth and prosperity of the country will be impaired.

MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

I most deeply sympathise with the distresses of the manufacturing districts, and I contemplate with feelings of the sincerest satisfaction, the patience with which those sufferings have been borne.

The depression under which the trade and manufactures of the country have been labouring has abated more slowly than I had thought myself warranted in anticipating; but I retain a firm expectation that the abatement will be progressive, and that the time is not distant, when under the blessing of Divine Providence, the commerce and industry of the United Kingdom will have resumed their wonted activity.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER,

Accompanying the following Subscription from Leeds for Messrs. PERRY, CLARKE, and CAMPION, in Giltspur-street Compter.

If your friends in this town had half the boldness in asking relief for the victims of oppression, as the Bible distributors have impudence in collecting cash for the double purpose of filling their own pockets, and of perplexing the minds of the poor Hindoos with the mysteries of the "word of life," we should not have to ask your acceptance of so small a sum as £2 2s. Who, except a saint, can ask a man to relieve the distresses of others when it is known that his children are neither so well fed, nor so well clothed as convicted felons? We know that the inmates of gaols have at least one meal a day, and enough of clothing to shelter them from the "pelting of the pitiless storm;" which is more than can be said of many of our day-labourers and industrious artisans, who are seen prowling about the streets like so many living skeletons. Our mites are small, but they will serve to shew that you live in our remembrance, and that amidst the general tumult of distress, we can think of those whose wants are less seen. and less heard of.

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